

IN THE CLAIMS

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-12 were pending. Please withdraw claims 7 and 12 and add claim 13. Please amend claims 1, 4-6 and 8-11. Claims 1-13 remain pending.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of pre-processing of a machine-readable form image with non-fixed fields layout, ~~comprising the method comprising:~~

[[-]] ~~acquiring a bit-mapped image of [[the]] the machine-readable form filled in form,~~
~~with print in one or more non-fixed data input fields;~~

[[-]] ~~identifying at least one form model of a form, the at least one form model containing~~
~~spatial and parametric properties of objects thereof~~[[,]] ;

[[-]] ~~preliminarily assigning at least one object of the form as a reference point for spatial~~
~~binding of at least one non-fixed data input field thereof; [[, -]] performing at least the~~
~~following steps:~~

[[•]] ~~a step of eliminating any skew, distortion and noise of the in the bit-mapped image~~[[,]];

[[•]] ~~a step of parsing the bit-mapped image into regions~~[[,]] ; and

[[•]] ~~a step of defining a spatial location of at least one non-fixed data input field relative~~[[ly]]
~~to at least one reference point, said step further comprising: wherein said defining the location of~~
~~the at least one non-fixed data input field comprises:~~

[[■]] ~~selecting a non-fixed data input field to search in the said the at least one~~
~~form model description; ;~~

[[■]] ~~accepting from the at least one form model description at least one~~
~~reference point properties property for [[the]] a spatial relative reference of the said data~~
~~input field~~[[,]] ;

[[■]] ~~searching and locating said at least one reference point on the form bit-~~
~~mapped image~~[[,]] ;

[[■]] ~~searching and locating the said data input field on the form bit-mapped~~
~~image relative~~[[ly]] to at least one reference point taking into account all spatial and
parametrical properties[[,]] described in the form model[[,]] ; and

[[■]] ~~profound identification of the said identifying each data input field~~
~~position in the case of multiple search result data input fields.~~

2. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the said reference point is represented by a text region.
3. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the said text region is additionally subjected to a text recognition.
4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein in the case of multiple ~~search result~~ data input fields the said identification of each data input field is performed via setting up and accepting of hypotheses and compliance estimation ~~with~~ of the form model description.
5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein an additional information about ~~[[the]]~~ each of said non-fixed data input field is used.
6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a non-fixed data input field may be used as a reference point.
7. (WITHDRAWN) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the said step of data input field identification in a case of multiple identification result is performed partly manually.
8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the spatial location of a reference point ~~spatial location~~ is not fixed from a first scan of the machine-readable form to a second scan of the machine-readable form.
9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein one reference point is used for spatial binding of more ~~[[then]]~~ than one data input field.
10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the spatial binding of one data input field is performed relative to more ~~[[then]]~~ than one reference point.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein a reference point comprises more ~~[[then]]~~ than one form object.
12. (WITHDRAWN) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein a reference point is described in a form of alternative.
13. (NEW) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the identifying each data input field position in the case of multiple data input fields is a profound identification.